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Sub-Commission on the Promotion and
Protection of Human Rights
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Agenda item 12 (a) (i)

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN FIELDS WITH WHICH THE SUB-COMMISSION HAS BEEN OR MAY BE CONCERNED:

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS RELATING, INTER ALIA, TO:

PROMOTION, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Written statement submitted by the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 May 1999]

1. In this climate of adversity and tragedies which human beings inflict on each other, we have to think seriously of how to make the international mechanisms, which are the only instruments we have, an effective and a viable force in resolving international conflicts and appeasing the bloodthirsty instinct thriving inside of man. The United Nations is the only refuge and must be free from monopoly in order to make the people of the world believe in its mission and representation.

2. For years, during numerous conferences, we have listened carefully to statements on behalf of some of the people of this planet who suffer from mass deportation, massacres and genocide. Crimes whose brutal and evil nature would shame the devils themselves. What has befallen and is still befalling these people, especially the Palestinian people, in terms of suppression, oppression and persecution lasting more than 50 years, is an affront to human dignity at large and an affront to the letter and spirit of the very meaning of the word "human being".

3. We do not wish to repeat the details of the atrocities committed against the Palestinian people and the horrific facts in regards to what has befallen the people of the Balkans. Such wickedness is supposed to profoundly shock humanity's conscience and disgrace the most graceful among us. It makes us wonder where international law is in all of this chaos. Where are the international human rights instruments? Where is the General Assembly of the United Nations, and where is the Security Council?

4. The world society that issued at the beginning of this century the Charter of the United Nations and gave the right of veto to super-Powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom, was aiming at preventing hostile acts of aggression by the strong and powerful against the weak and unarmed. Such a right of veto provided for rescuing future generations from the misfortunes and bloodshed of warfare. Wars which twice before had brought upon one generation misery beyond description. Nevertheless, hostile transgressions of the strong against the weak are still being committed every day and threatening international peace. Yesterday against Libya and the Sudan, today against Iraq and the Balkans, and tomorrow no one knows whose turn it might be. All this is done in violation of international laws and the Charter of the United Nations and out of the context of Security Council resolutions.

5. One of the causes of the problems humanity faces every day is that of the world media. As they have reached almost every corner of the earth, the world media have, more often than not, used subjective data - from dubious and questionable sources. In an ingenious way, through employing biased and selective reporting techniques, the world media imposed propaganda on the world which is driving everyone downward as nations and people stumble in darkness.

6. Clothing a lie in the attire of truth is much more dangerous and destructive than outright lying since very few viewers exercise the necessary caution or have a sufficient grasp of the facts. It involves emphasizing half of the truth and intentionally overlooking the other half. It also involves attaching significance to the insignificant while making what is significant appear to be insignificant. Such world media practices rely on

misrepresentation of the truth not in the ordinary sense of falsification, but rather in a complicated and clever fabrication of misinformation. This role the world media have played and continue to play is an invisible and subliminal one, detected only by experts highly specialized in their fields.

7. The world media and the influence a few powerful pressure groups have over them have become an indisputable reality. They have been turned into an underhanded weapon against the human mind which is in a state of paradoxical turmoil. If not altered, this situation will eventually lead to grave and dangerous consequences. Internationally recognized human rights instruments and laws must be fully implemented to confront those who knowingly mix what is false with what is true.

8. The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations states: "We the peoples of the United Nations." These words have depth and a powerful meaning, and "We the peoples of the United Nations" must preserve them in our conscience and guard them through our work. NGOs participating in the Sub-Commission and even those who are not participating truly represent the people of the world. Therefore, NGOs must rise to the challenge of highlighting the problems and identifying the solutions to prevent the recklessness of the strong and powerful from exposing the world to imminent disaster.

9. EAFORD calls upon the international community and NGOs to support the following recommendations which our organization considers as essential and of utmost importance:

(a) To call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of military force out of the context of Security Council resolutions;

(b) To call on the General Assembly to find ways and means to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council in discharging its principal role of maintaining international peace and security. Consultations should be started to work towards seeking a possible solution to the right of veto and its interference with resolutions adopted unanimously or by consensus. We recommend devising appropriate measures and procedures for ensuring the forwarding of any veto interfering with a resolution adopted by consensus to the International Court of Justice for a final decision in support or against the veto. (EAFORD has submitted a letter to the Secretary-General in this regard and we hope it will receive the necessary support.);

(c) To call on the Secretary-General to work in cooperation with the General Assembly to promote the application of the articles and clauses of the Charter advising and requiring the forwarding of international conflicts to the International Court of Justice, and for military force not to be used before a judgement is issued by the International Court of Justice;

(d) To call on the Secretary-General to initiate plans in cooperation with the General Assembly for the establishment of a United Nations global satellite channel network, translated into all the United Nations official

languages. The global satellite network should be under the supervision of the Secretariat and should transmit the work and conferences of the United Nations and provide press coverage to shed light on issues of concern to international cooperation and human solidarity.

10. Could our recommendations be oversimplifying complicated international matters? Could we be aspiring to outlandish ideals beyond humanity's reach? It may seem so, but we acknowledge that humanity's greatest strides towards peace and prosperity and the prevention of large-scale pain and suffering were made possible because of similar aspirations.